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Flanagan - Interior 2879

TRUMPETER SWAN, ONCE ENDANGERED, NOW ON DISPLAY IN 24 ZOOS

From the latter part of the 19th century until 1935, trumpeter swans were threatened with extinction in the United States. In that year, the Red Rock Lakes Migratory Waterfowl Refuge was established in southeastern Montana by the Federal Government to preserve their last major breeding grounds and furnish this

species with additional protection. Since then these majestic native swans have increased their range to the point where they are now nesting in formerly unoccupied habitat in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho. The population now has increased to where total numbers in the tri-State area now fluctuate between 600 and 700.

In addition to this main population, trumpeter swans have also been established as wild breeding birds by the Bureau on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Oregon, Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge in north-central Nevada, and the National Elk Refuge in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. An attempt is currently being made to reestablish trumpeters in prairie habitat, and a flock of acclimated immature birds is scheduled for release this year on the Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota.

Trumpeter swans also exist in Alaska and Canada where the total population has been estimated at about 1,500. In early colonial times this species commonly wintered by the thousands in Chesapeake Bay, Currituck Sound, in Texas Coast estuaries, and along the lower Columbia River in Washington and Oregon. The remnant breeding population in the Red Rock Lakes-Yellowstone region managed to survive the white man's impact because they wintered in isolated mountain valleys along creeks and rivers kept open during the cold weather by copious warm springs. Their more numerous relatives, which inhabited the interior of Canada, were taken by thousands for food by native Indians, by early day fur trappers who killed them for their skins, and by waterfowl hunters in the United States who shot them during the fall, winter, and spring, there being no effective closed season on waterfowl until the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed in 1918.

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